

Permitted tourism operators are engaging directly with Reef Traditional Owners in positive partnerships, facilitated in part through the managing agencies' \* [Cultural Referral](#) program.

Permit Holder and tourism operator, Adam Mervyn-Jones recently recognised the benefits of working with Traditional Owners when establishing his business, Reef Navigator, out of Mourilyan Harbour, North Queensland. Adam made contact with local [TUMRA Steering Committees](#), [Mandubarra](#) and [Girringun](#), and developing TUMRA group, Dyrirbarra Bagirbarra People, to discuss his proposed activities and learn about the cultural significance of the region.

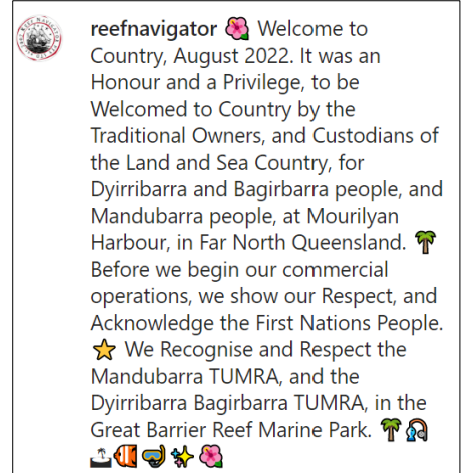
Prior to applying for his Marine Parks permit, Adam personally contacted the Traditional Owners of the Sea Country he hoped to operate in, showing respect and building resilient relationships. Although challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, Adam has since met in person with groups, receiving a traditional Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony by James Epong, Mandubarra Traditional Owner, and Senior Ranger, along with the blessing of his vessel, Oisin, by Pastor Anthony Edwards Snr, Dyrirbarra Bagirbarra Traditional Owner. Adam plans to continue to expand his business on the Great Barrier Reef, adding vessels and services at a sustainable rate, all preceded by the development of meaningful relationships with Traditional Owners of the natural wonder he feels privileged to access.

#### The Cultural Referrals program:

Established under the objectives of the Reef Authority's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park](#), the Cultural Referral program aims to:

- incorporate targeted input from Traditional Owner groups on potential impacts to cultural heritage values from permitted activities in the Marine Parks;
- promote increased understanding by Traditional Owners of the joint permission system and general management of permitted activities in their area; and
- enhance understanding by Permit Holders, applicants, and other stakeholders of cultural heritage values in the Marine Parks.

\***Managing agencies** refers to the management partnership between the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Reef Authority) and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in the joint Marine Parks.



Source: Instagram

